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VALERY GULICK

THE JOYS OF IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)
(ADVANCED SCRIPT FOR ST. PATRICK'S DAY)

ANNCR: ST. PATRICK'S DAY IS CELEBRATED EACH MARCH 17 BY IRISH-AMERICANS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HERE IN WASHINGTON, A WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION GIVES THE PUBLIC THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAMPLE A DIVERSITY OF EXAMPLES OF BEAUTIFUL IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE. HERE WITH THIS STORY IS----------.

NARR: GENUINE IRISH MUSIC CAN BE HEARD IN FOUR AREA IRISH PUBS (OR RESTAURANTS), IN A THREE-HOUR RADIO-SHOW DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO REAL IRISH FOLK MUSIC AND IN TWO SPECIAL CONCERTS WHICH OFFER TO WASHINGTONIANS THE ARTISTRY OF LIAM CLANCY AND TOMMY MAKEM AND OF A GROUP CALLED THE CHIEFTAINS.

A SHORT TIME AGO A LOCAL GROUP OF IRISH-AMERICANS TOOK TWO WEEKS OFF FROM THEIR JOBS AND STUDIES, TO PERFORM IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE IN TEN CITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. THE IDEA FOR THE TOUR CAME FROM RICHARD SHEA, AN ANTHROPOLOGIST WHO ENJOYS AND PERFORMS IRISH MUSIC AND DANCING. HE FEELS THAT WHILE IRISH MUSIC HAS ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE POPULARITY IN THE UNITED STATES, THE BEST EXAMPLES OF IT HAVE NOT BEEN WIDELY APPRECIATED:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- SHEA

"AMERICANS TEND TO THINK OF IRISH MUSIC AS BAWDY, RISQUE, GLORIFYING VIOLENCE...THAT'S DEFINITELY PART OF THE TRADITION, BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO IT THAN THAT."

NARR: RICHARD SHEA DESCRIBES THE OLD TRADITIONAL STYLE AS SLOW AND WITH LOTS OF MUSICAL ORNAMENTATIONS.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- SHEA

"THEY ARE BASICALLY SONGS THAT COME OUT OF A RURAL CULTURE WHERE THE PERSPECTIVE ON TIME, SPACE AND DISTANCES WERE VERY DRAWN OUT. PEOPLE HAD LOTS OF TIME TO SPEND TELLING STORIES AND THEY ELABORATE AT GREAT LENGTH."

NARR: AS AN EXAMPLE, HERE IS TOMMY MAKEM SINGING THE "BARD OF ARAMAGH" ...

TAPE: CUT THREE -- MUSIC (THE BARD OF ARMAGH) 3:22

NARR: THE "BARD OF ARMAGH" WAS COMPOSED BY TOMMY MAKEM IN THE IRISH BALLAD TRADITION. MAKEM AND THE CLANCY BROTHERS WERE IRISH-BORN SINGERS POPULAR IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE IN THE 1950S. AFTER SOME TWELVE VERY SUCCESSFUL YEARS, THE GROUP BROKE UP. OF THE THREE BROTHERS, ONLY LIAM CLANCY STILL PERFORMS TODAY. BUT WHILE THEY WERE TOGETHER THEY SANG SONGS OF DRINKING AND LOVE, OF EMMIGRATION AND HOMESICKNESS, OF SADNESS AND JOY, AND ESPECIALLY OF IRISH REBELLION. LET'S LISTEN TO THE CLANCY BROTHERS SINGING "OLD MAID IN THE GARRETT", THE STORY OF AN OLD MAID WHO IS DESPERATE TO FIND A HUSBAND...

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- MUSIC ("OLD MAID IN THE GARRETT") 2:31

NARR: WHILE TOMMY MAKEM AND THE CLANCY BROTHERS WERE POPULARIZING THEIR BRAND OF IRISH MUSIC, IRISH-AMERICANS, LOOKING INTO THEIR PAST CAME UP WITH AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MUSICAL TRADITION, NAMELY, THE ANCIENT MUSICAL STRAINS DATING BACK INTO THEIR GAELIC PAST.

FEELING THAT TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE WOULD APPEAL PARTICULARLY TO LARGE IRISH COMMUNITIES, RICHARD SHEA DECIDED

NARR: (CONT'D) TO ORGANIZE AND TAKE ON A TOUR A SMALL GROUP OF IRISH-AMERICAN MUSICIANS WHOM HE HAD COME TO KNOW THROUGH FOLK FESTIVALS HELD EVERY YEAR HERE IN WASHINGTON D.C. ONE OF THE MUSICIANS IS ALSO A CHAMPION OF IRISH "STEP-DANCING" WHICH MISTER SHEA DESCRIBES AS A HIGHLY DISCIPLINED FORM OF DANCING:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- SHEA

"THE BODY FROM THE WAIST UP IS HELD COMPLETELY STIFF, THE ARMS HANG AT THE SIDE; THEY RE NOT SUPPOSED TO MOVE AND NEITHER IS THE HEAD. PART OF THE IDEA IS TO FOCUS ALL THE ATTENTION ON THE FEET, BECAUSE THE FEET ARE DOING VERY, VERY, COMPLEX STE-WORK."

NARR: WITH A LITTLE IMAGINATION AND THE HELP OF BUTTON-ACCORDIONIST SEAN MCGLYNN, LISTEN TO HOW SOME IRISH-AMERICANS DANCE ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY...

TAPE: CUT SIX -- MUSIC (DANCE TUNE) 0:35

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